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A
LETTER
TO

Mr. Sn———/,

Occasion'd by some

INJURIOUS REFLECTIONS

IN THE

Fourth Volume of Mr. NEAL'S
History of the *Puritans*.

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IN THE

Fourth Volume of Mr. NEAL'S
History of the *Puritans*. K.

WHEREIN

Our Present LIBERTY is oppos'd to the
Persecutions of former Times.

By a PROTESTANT DISSENTER.

L O N D O N:

Printed for MESHACH STEEN, in the
Inner-Temple-Lane. 1739.

LETTER

TO

Mr. S.

Esq.

Historical Collections

IN THE

Vol. 5 Volume of Mr. Neal's
History of the Puritans

WHEATON

and John L. Smith
Proprietors of the Press

NEW YORK

1850

Printed for Mr. S.



A
L E T T E R
T O

Mr. S—————l,

Occasioned by

The FOURTH VOLUME of
Mr. NEAL'S *History of
the Puritans.*

S I R,

I N the last Visit you favour'd me
with, I observ'd you was very
solicitous to know my Thoughts
of the Fourth Volume of Mr. *Neal's*
History of the Puritans; especially
That Part which concern'd my An-
cestor. A little Examination of the
Book discover'd the ground of your
B Curiosity;

Curiosity : And I take this Publick way to satisfy it.

Mr. Neal says, (a) *If Richard had allowed the Captain of his Guard to secure Fleetwood and Desborough, as he undertook to do at the Hazard of his Life, he might have been established; but the Poor-Spirited Protector told him he was afraid of Blood. Poor-Spirited indeed, for refusing to be established by Blood in a possession he had no Right to!* But, (b) *as Richard Cromwel was innocent of all the Evil his Father had done, so it appears, much to his Praise, how he declined to continue that Evil by the addition of his own Guilt. Thus he might very well be enabled to (c) return to a private Life with more Satisfaction than when he was advanced to the Sovereignty: Which sets him in a much superiour Light to that his Father is placed in, where the Historian*

(a) Vol. 4. pag. 210. (b) pag. 260. (c) pag. 217.

Historian relates (d) *how he dissolved the Parliament by a File of Musqueteers, employed a Major to conduct the Speaker out of the Chair, and ordered a Common Soldier to take away that Fool's Bauble the Mace.* Richard had not a right Spirit for such extraordinary Work, (e) *who, in his Younger Years* (we are inform'd) *had not all that Zeal for Religion as was the Fashion of the Times.* Nor, does he seem to have had a Taste for the Style of the Times, if we may judge by his (f) Letter to the *University of Oxford*, in Resignation of the *Chancellorship*; which is express'd in a manner very different from the *Cant of Oliver*, or Monk's (g) *Fumes of Fanaticism.* But it is strangely surprising that Men of Learning and good Sense shou'd be so intoxicated, with such *Fumes*, by *King Charles II.* (b) *when His Majesty said his Prayers*

B 2

with

(d) Vol. 4. pag. 64. (e) pag. 260. (f) pag. 259. (g) pag. 240. (b) pag. 256.

with such an audible Voice in the Room adjoyning, that the Ministers might bear him, “ while he thanked God that he was a covenanted “ King, and hoped the Lord wou’d “ give him an humble, meek, forgiving Spirit, &c. Upon which Old Mr. Case lift up his Hands to Heaven, and blessed God, who had given them a praying King.

To return to Fleetwood and Desborough, where Mr. Neal says, (i) Thus was the Grandeur of Cromwel’s Family destroyed by the Pride and Resentment of some of it’s own Branches: Fleetwood had married the Widow of Ireton, one of Oliver’s Daughters, and being disappointed of the Protectorship by his Will, was determined that no single Person should be his Superior. Desborough, who had married Oliver’s Sister, joined in the fatal Conspiracy.

After

(i) Vol. 4. pag. 210.

After this we have a Letter from Mr. *Henry Cromwel*, Lord Lieutenant of *Ireland*, to his Brother Lieutenant General *Fleetwood*, in which are the following Words, (k) “ Let
 “ me beg you to remember how
 “ his late Highness loved you; how
 “ he honoured you with the highest
 “ Trust, by leaving the Sword in
 “ your Hand, which must defend
 “ or destroy us. And his declaring
 “ your Highness his Successor, shews,
 “ that he left it there to preserve
 “ him and his Reputation.” (l) *From these and some other of his Letters* (saith our Historian) ’tis natural to conclude that L. G. Fleetwood was at the Head of the Councils that deposed Richard, which might be owing either to his Commonwealth Principles, or to his disappointment of his Protectorship. However, when he found he cou’d not keep the Army within Bounds, who were for new Changes, he

(k) Vol. 4. pag. 214. (l) pag. 215.

he retired from publick Business, and spent the remainder of his Life privately among his Friends at Stoke-Newington, where he died soon after the Revolution, being more remarkable for Piety and Devotion than for Courage or deep Penetration in Politicks.

I can say nothing to the private Evidences which help the Historian to conclude naturally: But the Evidence he has trusted the World with appears no better, to me, than something between the *Possible* and the *Probable*. Not, that I am in the least Pain about any Crutches he can bring to support his Conclusion: For I very frankly declare that, if Lt. Gen. *Fleetwood* was the Occasion of pulling down the *Usurpation*, I so far value my self upon being his Descendant. And if he aimed at a Commonwealth, it was more eligible than the other Form, in my Judgment. But, if he meant his own Succession ;

sion ;—I shou'd be ashamed of the Design, and wou'd rejoice in the disappointment ; because of the glorious Consequences which followed to make us the *happy People* we now are. I am therefore so fond of such a piece of History, that I shou'd have no Delight in seeing it confuted. However, I take upon me to give the *Lye* to the malicious Motives our Historian has assign'd : And I here pronounce them to be *Scandalous* and *False*. Indeed it looks extreamly gracious in Mr. *Neal* to leave the General his Piety and Devotion, since he might have cancell'd them when his hand was in as a Judge of Man's Heart : And I think that wou'd have been less unbecoming the Character of a *Divine*, than to unite them with such wicked *Pride and Resentment*. But 'tis fit Mr. *Neal* shou'd be told that he has no more Right to (m) *ransack the very Heart than Bishop Harsenet had.*

(m) Vol. 2. pag. 233.

by In relation to General *Fleetwood's* *Courage* and *Politicks*, I do believe it is impossible for Mr. *Neal* and I to maintain a Dispute ~~for~~ any other Play than that of dry Affirming and Denying. So I shall only oppose his Reflection with the Credit of *Oliver Cromwel's* known *Courage* and deep *Penetration in Politicks*. For, if it was really the Design of *Oliver* to declare *Fleetwood* his Successor, 'tis natural to conclude, that he had quite different Thoughts of his General from Mr. *Neal* and his Informers both *Spiritual* and *Temporal*. But, if *Oliver* declared what he never intended, — it is an unlucky Fact in Proof of the most odious Representation that is given of him by the worst of his Enemies. Here the Historian is welcome to please his own Fancy, and choose for himself.

Whether General *Fleetwood* retired from *Publick Business* to *Stoke-Newington*, or not, is of no consequence

to any body, in the World, except the Historian. But, I think it is of some consequence to have it known that there was a Time when General *Fleetwood* did retire in dislike to the *Proceedings* against the *King's Life*: Which I now publish as an honour to his Name, and his *Posterity*. And I leave the Fact to be accounted for by the Historian's *deep-penetration* in Hearts.

The next thing I am disposed to take notice of, is Mr. *Neal's* great Candour and Impartiality in the Case of Dr. *Owen*. Our Historian informs us, (n) *that the Wallingford-House Party, of which Fleetwood and Deborough were the Head, invited Dr. Owen and Dr. Manton to their Consultations. Dr. Owen went to Prayer before they enter'd on Business, but Dr. Manton being late before he came, heard a loud Voice from within, saying, He must down, and he*
C *shall*

(n) Vol. 4. pag. 209.

shall down. Manton knew the Voice to be Dr. Owen's, and understood him to mean the Deposing of Richard, and therefore would not go in. But the Writer of Dr. Owen's Life discredits this Story; tho', in my opinion, 'tis very probable, for the Doctor inclined to a Commonwealth Government; He sided with the Army, and drew up their Address against Oliver's being King; upon which he declined in the Protector's Favour, and as soon as Richard became Chancellor of Oxford, he turned him out of the Vice-Chancellorship.

This part of the History I shall confront with a Quotation from the *Memoirs* of Dr. Owen's Life, done by a Person whose good Character is no more to be question'd than the Historian's: And I make no scruple to add that Mr. *Asty* went upon as good *Authorities* as Mr. *Neal* can pretend to. I have the Originals: Mr. *Neal* has long profess'd a value
for

for the Hand which wrote them ; and he might have seen them for asking. From these Originals were transcribed the *Memoirs* of Dr. Owen's Life, published by Mr. *Asty* in 1721. From hence I take the following Account, viz. September 3, 1658. Oliver Cromwell died, and his Son Richard was made Protector of the Commonwealth, but did not long continue in that high Station : The Officers of the Army brought in the Members of the old Parliament, who compell'd him to resign. These were turn'd out by Lambert, and a Committee of Safety erected : But they were soon after brought in again by General Monk, with the secluded Members, who when they met, voted for a new Parliament to sit at Westminster ; and these were the Instruments that brought in the King. We were oblig'd to take notice of these things, because Dr. Owen is suppos'd, by the interest he had in some Officers

of the Army, who met at Wallingford-House (of which some few were Members of his Church) to have had a chief hand in the alteration of the Government, which happen'd at that time. To his Art of perswasion, it seems this change was owing, and it is insinuated, that this was done out of Party-Zeal, or Resentment, because his Friends were not permitted to hold the Reins in their own hand. This charge is brought against him in a Book entitled, *Reliquiæ Baxterianæ*. viz. That “ Dr. Owen, and his Assistants did the main Work: He “ gather'd a Church at Lieutenant-General Fleetwood's Quarters, at “ Wallingford-House, consisting of “ the active Officers of the Army. “ (This Church-gathering has been “ the Church-scattering Project.) In “ this Assembly it was determin'd “ that Richard's Parliament must be “ dissolv'd, and then he quickly fell “ himself. Again, it is said, that
Dr.

“ Dr. *Owen* was the chief that head-
 “ ed the Independents in the Army
 “ with the greatest height, confi-
 “ dence, and applause ; and that he
 “ was the great perswader of *Fleet-*
 “ *wood, Desborough*, and the rest of
 “ the Officers of the Army, who
 “ were his gather’d Church, to com-
 “ pel *Richard Cromwell* to dissolve
 “ his Parliament.” *Mr. Baxter has*
not oblig’d the World by producing his
Vouchers for it, which method in the
like instances he calls Slander. ’Tis
pity Mr. Baxter did not publish this
account in the Doctor’s life-time, for
then doubtless he wou’d have set the
matter in a just light ; but since ’tis
otherwise, we must take leave to ob-
serve that Historians, on whose credit
we receive an account of the Trans-
actions of those Times are silent as to
this matter, particularly Whitlock
in his impartial Memoirs (as Mr.
Baxter himself calls them) says nothing
of it ; and it may be Party-Zeal (to
speak

*Speak the best of it) might carry that reverend Author beyond his Evidence; but to all such intimations we shall subjoin the Doctor's own vindication of himself, which considering his known Character in the World, will (we hope) obtain credit beyond unattested Assertions to the contrary. It seems the Popish Author of a Book intitl'd, Fiat lux, had charg'd the Doctor with having had a hand in the late Troubles in the Nation, and affirm'd (they are his own Words) " That he was part
 " of that dismal Tempest, which
 " overbore all before it, not only
 " Church and State, but Reason,
 " Right, Honesty, all true Religi-
 " on, and even Good-nature too."*
*To this the Doctor replies with just reflections on the Author's desperate Malice, and vindicates himself in these Words, viz. " To deliver you,
 " if it may be, from the like mis-
 " carriages for the future, let me in-
 " form you, that the Author of the*
 2 *" Ani-*

“ *Animadversions* is a Person that
 “ never had a hand in, nor gave
 “ consent to the raising of any War
 “ in these Nations, nor to any Po-
 “ litical Alteration in them, no, not
 “ to any one that was amongst us,
 “ during our revolutions; but he
 “ acknowledges that he liv’d and
 “ acted under them the things where-
 “ in he thought his duty consisted,
 “ and challenges all Men to charge
 “ him with doing the least personal
 “ injury to any Man, professing him-
 “ self ready to give satisfaction to any
 “ one that can justly claim it.” *We*
have also another testimony of his own
innocence in this matter, in his answer
to that slanderous Book, whereof one
Vernon, a High-Church Clergyman
in Gloucestershire, was the Author,
which Libel was answer’d by Sir
Thomas Overbury, and by the Doctor
distinctly. He brings the same charge
against the Doctor as Mr. Baxter
has done; and what does the Doctor
reply?

reply? “ Of the same nature (says
 “ he) is what he affirms of my being
 “ the Instrument in the ruin of
 “ *Richard Cromwell*, with whose set-
 “ ting up, and pulling down, I had
 “ no more *to do than himself*.” Having
set this matter in this just light, we
doubt not but every impartial Reader
will think the Doctor sufficiently vin-
dicated from a charge that was not
supported by any Evidence, and ap-
pears not to have the least founda-
tion.

What I have here brought from
 the *Memoirs* of Dr. Owen's Life is a
 manifest contradiction to the account
 our Historian gives in this particular.
 When matters of Fact are contested
 by *Party-Authorities*, I am sensible,
 there will be a *Byass* in the Reader :
 Yet, when a Person of Dr. Owen's
 establish'd Reputation answers for
 himself to a Charge, one may expect
 to have his Declaration more regard-
 ed than the Suggestions of an Adver-
 sary.

fary. And thus I leave it to the Reader, with this addition from the *Memoirs*, that *the Book call'd Fiat lux*, was written by John Vincent Lane, a Franciscan Friar; wherein under the pretence of recommending Moderation and Charity, he with a great deal of subtilty invites men over to the Church of Rome, as the only infallible cure of all Church-divisions: Two Impressions of this Book were printed off before the Doctor had seen it; at length it was sent him by a Person of Honour, who desired him to write an answer to it; which he did in a very short time: This Answer bears the Title of Animadversions on Fiat lux, by a Protestant; which being generally accepted, made the Friar very angry, so that he published a Sheet or two by way of reply, which produc'd the Doctor's answer, entitled, *A Vindication of Animadversions on Fiat lux*, to which never any reply was given. This Book recommended him to

the esteem of the Lord Chancellor Hide, who, by Sir Bulstrode Whitlock sent for him, and acknowledg'd the Service of his late Books against Fiat lux; assuring him that he had deserv'd the best of any English Protestant of late Years; and that for these performances the Church was bound to own and advance him; and at the same time he offer'd him preferment if he wou'd accept it.

Mr. Neal was a Subscriber to the very Book which contains the *Memoirs* of Dr. Owen's Life; and the Doctor's own Reflections on a *Slenderous Libel* against himself, in a Letter to Sir Thomas Overbury. It is therefore a little strange that he shou'd lay aside the Historian, to deliver his Opinion in favour of such a Story as he relates about Dr. Manton. I will not insist on the possibility of Dr. Manton's mistaking a Voice; but it was certainly more than possible
for

for him to mistake the *Application* of *Words* he heard, when his Ears were not in the same Room with the Mouth which utter'd: And it may be consider'd how far an Open-Door will agree with such *Close-Consultations*. As the Words were, only, *understood to mean the Deposing of Richard*, they might, really, have meant the *Downfall of Antichrist*: And, *in my Opinion*, 'tis very probable, for Dr. *Owen* knew better than to denounce so absolutely from any *Authority* that was capable of being mistaken. And shall a Story thus founded upon Conjecture, be admitted, by Mr. *Neal*, in direct contradiction to Dr. *Owen's* positive Declaration concerning himself? This is such an assault upon the Doctor's Veracity, that I cou'd not bear to have it stand uncensur'd; and, for that reason (alone) I concern'd my self with this Part of the History;—having no Objection to the Contents of the

Charge. I hope it may be affirm'd, without Reflection, that Dr. Owen was exceeded by none of his *Cotemporaries* in any good Quality whatever: And I will venture through all Mr. *Neal's* displeasure to assert my Trust in Dr. *Owen's Testimony* concerning himself, in opposition to every Report.

Now, after all this personal Partiality, I must do our Historian the justice to own that he has generously told us how the *Spirit of Persecution* haunted all *Denominations* more or less; and most appear'd when the *Spiritual Guides* had the greatest Influence. All *Parties*, we find will have their Gathering and their Scattering Projects in Church and State. From whence 'tis natural to conclude, that they, who are in the Saddle, will keep their Seat as long as they can; whilst they, who wou'd be there, will be ever jostling and jockeying for it. In what manner this has been
 verify'd,

verify'd, I refer to the 244th page of the 4th Volume; where Mr. *Neal*, in one short Period, very comprehensively informs his Reader that, *as the Army and Independants over-reached the Presbyterians in 1648, the Presbyterians, in conjunction with the Scots, blew up the Independants in 1659, and next Year the Episcopal Party, by an artful management of the credulous Presbyterians, undermined and deceived them both.*

When Power is engaged on the side of Justice and Mercy to Mankind, it is a glorious Trust: But, to see such an advantage employ'd, by a reasoning sociable Creature, to torment it's own Nature,—is shocking; and when *Religion* is transform'd into the *Tool of Persecution*,—'tis best represented by a *Fallen Angel*. How Power has been possess'd and abus'd by all *Denominations*, is too plain in the History before us: Tho' I must observe that the smallest *Share of Guilt*

Guilt seems to lie upon the Independants here ; which might be owing to the noble Principle they profess'd, of (o) *an* Universal Toleration. But, it moves me when I read how the poor Independants became (p) *Petitioners* for *Toleration* against their *Brethren*, the *Presbyterians*, who (q) *were enchanted with the Beauties of Covenant Uniformity*. I am so remote from any *Party-Aim* in this Remark, that I sincerely declare my Respect and Esteem for both *Denominations* to be so equally divided, as leaves me at a loss where to give the Right Hand of *Fellowship*.

Every Party, we see, had an Instrument—or a solemn *League and Covenant* ;—or *Something* as good to make a *Test* of: and *all* might be thought, by their *Owners*, unexceptionable enough to be complied with. This will be easily supposed by any
Man

(o) Vol. 4. pag. 88. (p) pag. 70. Vol. 3. pag. 304, 305, 310. (q) Vol. 3. pag. 310.

Man who examines himself, because he may recollect a time when he believed so infallibly well of his own Opinions as to conclude a little unreasonably against a different way of *Thinking*. Yet, the least Consideration makes it self-evident that every *Mortal* (except his *Holiness* at *Rome*) may mistake, and therefore can have no Right to oblige People to believe more than they can. To be serious, how wretched is the Condition of that People whose Consciences, Bodies and Estates must be subject to *Civil* and *Ecclesiastical Tyranny*! On the contrary, how happy is that *Nation*, where the Conscience is left free; where all are subject to *Laws* of their own making, and alike protected by them!

We read how it has been with all our *Ancestors*, in their Turns:—We feel how it is with Us now.—The one fairly set against the other, can admit of no Difficulty in the *Option*.
There

There was a time when, our Historian tells us, *if Cromwell had lived ten or twelve Years longer, Episcopacy might have been lost beyond Recovery.*—Now *Episcopacy* is in the full and safe *Possession of Dignities and Emoluments.* The time was when *Dis-senters* were persecuted by *Church-men*, and by one another:—That evil Spirit is suppress'd, and we are now secure in *Liberty*, under the most righteous merciful Government of a *Prince*, who is a determin'd Enemy to *Persecution*, and who cannot be outdone in *Zeal* for the *Protestant Interest*, or the Good of his *Subjects.* This being our present happy Case, surely we never can be mad enough to give a *common Enemy* the Diversion of drawing Us in to disparage the *Revolution*, to disturb the *Protestant Succession*, or to assist in alienating the Affections of the People from King George, his *Family* and his *Administration.* The *Pro-*
testant

testant Dissenters particularly shou'd remember in whose *Reign* and *Administration*, and by what *Party* their *Liberties* began to be invaded with an Act to divest them of their *natural Right* as *Parents*. And, if the first Attack was so violent, the least that cou'd have been fear'd, from the next, was to be deprived of their *Legal Right* to Vote at *Elections*, as *Englishmen*. It is absurd, then, to suppose a *Protestant Dissenter* can be deluded, by any pretence, to *Vote such Persons* into a *Capacity of taking away their Votes*. They must believe against Demonstration to expect the Friendship of a *Party*, which never possess'd the Power that did not assault their *Liberties*. And if the last Act of Power had the Cruelty to oppress them in so tender a point as the Education of their Children—, I don't see how it is possible for the *Dissenters* to have any Evidence of a *Conversion*,

E

without

without a *desperate Experiment* ;—
 which, I know, they are too Wise
 to try.

Before I take my leave of this
 History, I must congratulate my
 Countrymen that they are not pes-
 ter'd with the (r) *Ordinance of 1649.*
The Preamble of which sets forth, that,
 “ Whereas divers Scandalous and Se-
 “ ditious Pamphlets are daily printed,
 “ and dispersed with officious Indus-
 “ try, by the malignant *Party*, both
 “ at Home and Abroad, with a de-
 “ sign to subvert the present *Govern-*
 “ *ment*, and to take off the Affec-
 “ tions of the People from it, it is
 “ therefore Ordained,
 “ That the Author of every Sedi-
 “ tious Libel or Pamphlet shall be
 “ fined Ten Pounds, or suffer Forty
 “ Days Imprisonment. The Printer
 “ Five Pounds, and his Printing-
 “ Press to be broken. The Book-
 “ seller Forty Shillings ; the Buyer
 “ Twenty

“ Twenty Shillings, if he conceals
 “ it, and does not deliver it up to
 “ a Justice of Peace. It is further
 “ Ordained, That no News-Paper
 “ shall be printed, or sold without
 “ Licence, under the Hand of the
 “ Clerk of the Parliament, or the
 “ Secretary of the Army, or such
 “ other Person as the Council of
 “ State shall appoint. No Printing-
 “ Presses are to be allowed but in
 “ *London*, and in the two *Univer-*
 “ *sities*. All Printers are to enter in-
 “ to Bonds of three Hundred Pounds
 “ not to print any Pamphlet against
 “ the State, without Licence, as a-
 “ foresaid, unless the Author's or
 “ Licenser's Name, with the Place
 “ of his Abode, be prefixed. All
 “ Importers of Seditious Pamphlets
 “ are to forfeit Five Pounds for e-
 “ very such Book or Pamphlet. No
 “ Books are to be landed in any
 “ other Port but that of *London*,
 “ and to be viewed by the Master
 “ and

“ and Wardens of the Company of
“ *Stationers*. This Act to continue in
“ Force for two Years.”

S I R,

This Letter wou'd have waited on
you sooner, if it had not been detain'd
by private Reasons. Mr. *Neal* and
Mr. *Asty* are the only Authors I
have to do with. You put me upon
turning over the History; which
made it necessary for me to look in-
to the *Memoirs*: And, in return, I
make you accountable for the Con-
sequences.

I am,

S I R,

Your very Humble Servant.

February 1st,

1738-9

